

“A Grave Offense: The Looting of Mary Ohr’s Gravesite at C & O Canal”



Presented by
Staff Archeologist, Karen L. Orrence
NCR Regional Archeology Program



Mary Blackwell Ohr Grave in the Historic Brent/Blackwell/Widmeyer Cemetery,
C & O Canal, Hancock, Maryland

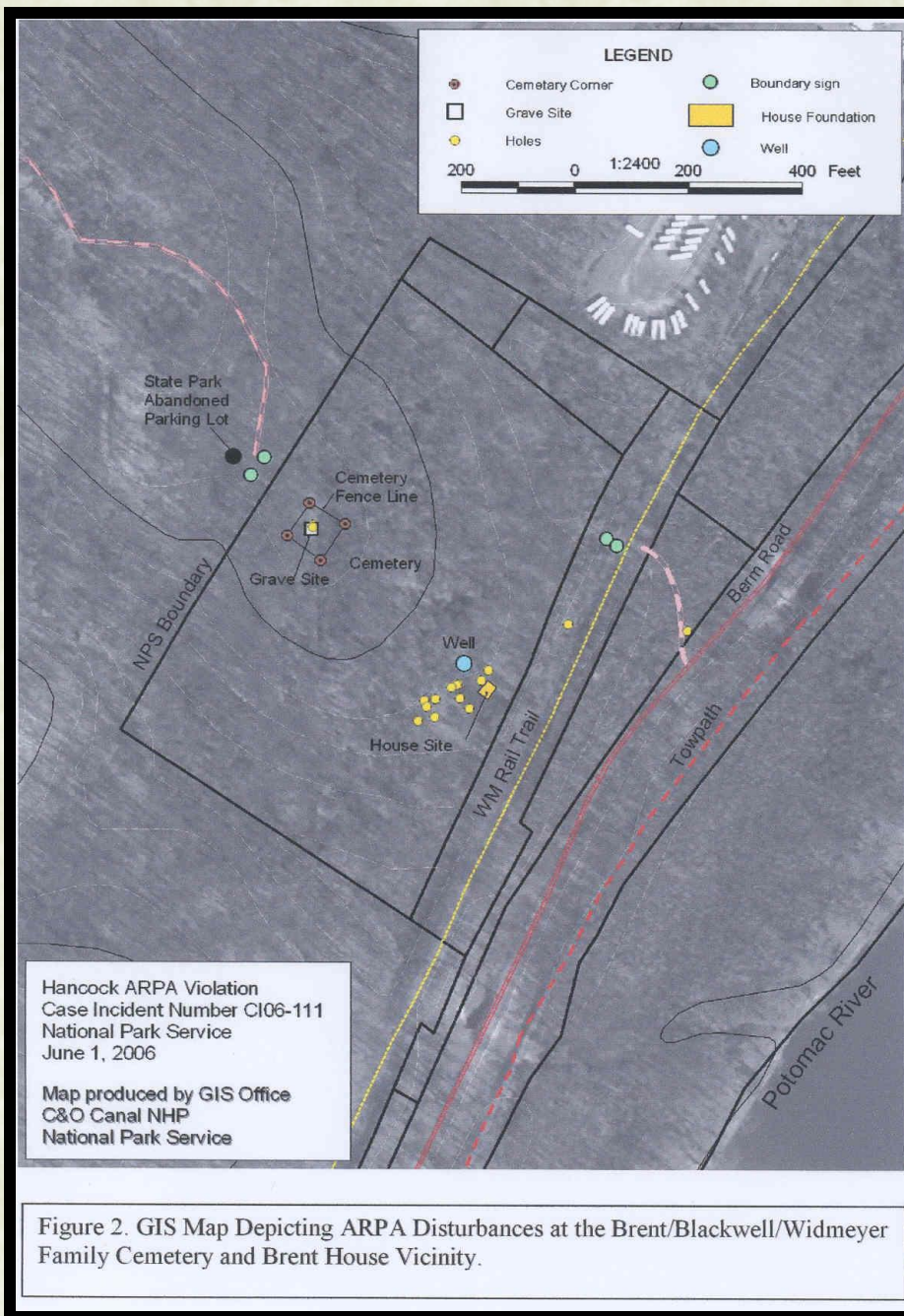


Figure 2. GIS Map Depicting ARPA Disturbances at the Brent/Blackwell/Widmeyer Family Cemetery and Brent House Vicinity.

ARPA (16USC 470aa-470ll)

Prohibited Acts:

- “...excavate, remove, damage, alter or deface or attempt to...”
- “...sell, purchase, exchange, transport, receive, or offer to...”
- “remove archeological resources in violation of State or local law and move them in interstate or foreign commerce...”
- “hire, counsel, or procure another to violate the law.”

Elements of ARPA:

- Archeological Resource
 - a) Item of past human existence
 - b) Archeological interest
 - c) Over 100 years old
- On public or Indian lands
- Without a permit



Brent/Blackwell/Widmeyer Family Cemetery, C&O Canal



Headstone Inscription Reads:

“Mary.

Wife of Dr. C. H. Ohr

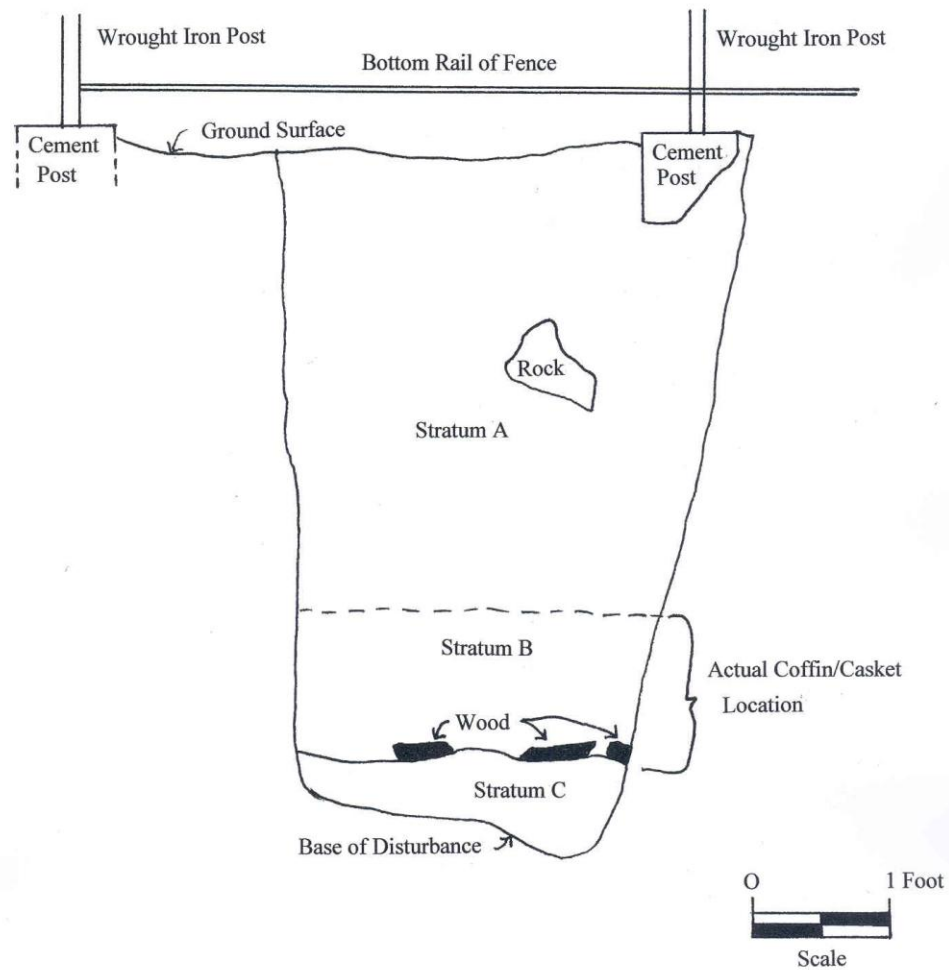
Daughter of David and Ann Blackwell

Died October 10, 1875

Aged 74 years and 9 months”

Desecration of Mary Ohr's
Grave, C & O Canal,
Hancock, Maryland





KEY:

Stratum A: Brown (10YR 5/3) silty sand (fill from grave shaft).

Stratum B: Yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) silty sand mottled with Black (10YR 2/1) silty sand and containing wood fragments (actual coffin/casket location).

Stratum C: Strong brown (7.5YR 5/6) sandy clay (subsoil).

Figure 3. South Profile of Hole 1 (Mary Blackwell Ohr Grave).



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Coffin Remains on Top of Backdirt





Left to Right - Archeologist Michelle Hammer (Harpers Ferry) & LE Rangers Brandon Brown & Dan Albus (C&O), Recovering Cultural Materials, Human Remains, and Physical Evidence From the Grave Disturbance



Brown Fabric
Fragment from
Mary Ohr's Dress
Recovered While
Screening Backdirt
Pile B



Wooden Coffin Fragments Recovered from Mary Ohr Grave
Disturbance, C & O Canal, Hancock, Maryland

April 21, 2006

Case Incident #06-111
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal NHP Headquarters
Photographer: U.S. Park Ranger Daniel Albus

Hole 1 – Pile B Metal Hardware



↑ Above collected April 19, 2006 ↑



↓ Below collected April 20, 2006 ↓



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Metal Coffin Hardware Recovered from Mary Ohr Grave Disturbance



Human Bone Recovered from Mary Ohr Grave Disturbance



Documenting Illegal Metal Detecting Disturbances Near the Brent House

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C&O Canal Natural Resource
Manager, Marie Frias Sauter
Using GPS to Map the Site -
Including the Location of
US/NPS Boundary Marker
Near the Western Maryland
Rail Trail





Penalties: archeological or commercial value **plus** the cost of restoration and repair.

- **Misdemeanor** (\$500 or less) - \$100,000 and/or 1 year
- **Felony** (more than \$500) - \$250,000 and/or 2 years
- **Second offense** (prior misdemeanor or felony conviction; no value/damage limit) - \$250,000 and/or 5 years
- **Forfeiture** of materials, equipment, and vehicles

Civil Penalties:

- Payment to the government of the archeological or commercial value plus the cost of restoration and repair
- Damages are doubled for second and subsequent violations
- Forfeiture of materials, equipment, and vehicles

Ready for Reburial: Mary Ohr's Remains and Coffin Remnants



C & O Canal LE Ranger Dan Albus assisting with the Reburial of Mary Ohr



Gravesite after Reburial and Restoration

